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(54) Title: METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR PRESENTING STEREOSCOPIC IMAGES			
(57) Abstract			
<p>Stereoscopic images are presented by alternately displaying corresponding left eye and right eye images in succession, substantially extinguishing transmission of light from the left eye images to the right eye of a viewer and from the right eye images to the left eye of the viewer, for example by the use of polarizing filters (2, 6), and alternately and in synchronism with the alternate display of images, scattering unextinguished light from the left eye images that leaks through to the viewer's right eye and from the right eye images that leaks through to the viewer's left eye. In a preferred embodiment, scattering is achieved by using a liquid crystal scattering shutter (10, 12) that is electrically triggered in synchronism with the display of images. The shutter disperses the unextinguished light that leaks through the system so that no image information is perceived and the light appears merely as a slight increase in background illumination.</p>			

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Title: METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR PRESENTING
STEREOSCOPIC IMAGES

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to stereoscopic displays
5 in general and more particularly (but not exclusively) to
stereoscopic motion picture projection.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Stereoscopic 3-D imaging requires the
presentation of two slightly different sets of images to
10 a viewer; one set corresponds to a left eye viewpoint and
the other corresponds to a right eye viewpoint. When the
sets of images are presented so that only the left eye of
a viewer can see the left eye set of images and the right
eye can only see the right eye set of images, the viewer
15 will be able to perceive a 3-D image.

Several different methods of separating left and
right eye images are known. In the anaglyph method,
different colour filters are used. Typically, the left
eye and right eye images are projected simultaneously but
20 in different colours, say red and blue respectively, and
the viewer wears a pair of glasses fitted with red and
blue filters arranged to appropriately separate the
images. A major disadvantage of this method is that the
resulting 3-D images are deficient in colour information.

25 Another method of image separation involves the
use of mutually extinguishing polarizing filters. The
filters are placed in front of left and right eye
projectors with their polarizing axes at 90 degrees to
each other. Viewers wear eyeglasses with polarizing
30 filters arranged in the same orientation as the filters on
the projectors. The left and right eye images appear on
the screen at the same time, but only the left eye
polarized light is transmitted through the left eye lens
of the eyeglasses and only the right eye polarized light
35 is transmitted through the right eye lens. This method is
inexpensive and allows full colour 3-D images. However,

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it has limitations in that a substantial amount of unwanted transmission can occur and can result in the formation of objectionable ghost images. For instance, the polarization characteristics of the light can be 5 significantly altered by reflection from a screen, though metallic screen coatings will mitigate this effect. If linear polarizers (which are most effective) are used, ghost images will also increase as the viewer tilts his or her head to the left or right.

10 A third known method involves time multiplexing of left and right eye images. Left and right eye images are presented alternately so that there is only one eye image on the screen at any one moment in time. Viewers wear glasses which alternately block the view of one eye 15 so that only the correct image will be seen by each eye. In other words when a left eye image is projected onto a screen the left eye lens of the glasses will be transparent and the right eye lens will be opaque. When the image on the screen changes to a right eye image, the 20 left lens of the glasses becomes opaque and the right eye lens becomes transparent. The glasses typically have electro-optic liquid crystal shutters and are powered by batteries. This method largely overcomes the problems of unwanted transmission due to head tilt and does not 25 require a special screen to maintain polarization; however it is substantially more expensive than each of the other methods of image separation described previously. An additional disadvantage is that electronic alternate eye glasses weigh considerably more than passive glasses. 30 This is a significant problem when the glasses are designed with large oversized lenses for use in a wide field of view motion picture theatre such as those marketed by Imax Corporation.

The liquid crystal shutters that are used in 35 time-multiplexing stereoscopic imaging are usually extinguishing shutters made of at least two linear polarizers on either side of a liquid crystal cell which

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contains a thin layer liquid crystal material between two sheets of glass. The two polarizers are oriented with their axes generally orthogonal and the liquid crystal material acts as a variable polarizer influenced by an 5 electric field. Such shutters block a significant proportion of the light when in an opaque state but they have limited transmission when they are in the transparent state, typically about 25-30% of incident light. The resulting images are somewhat dim, but they can be 10 produced to have a 150:1 ratio of desired transmission to unwanted transmission, which is acceptable.

When assessing the quality of 3-D motion picture images three figures of merit are used, namely maximum transmission, extinction ratio and effective contrast. 15 Maximum transmission is the percentage of light generated by the projectors which actually reaches the eyes of a viewer. The extinction ratio is defined as a ratio of the brightness of a correct or wanted image to the brightness of an incorrect or unwanted image that leaks through the 20 system. In a 3-D motion picture projection system, the extinction ratio gives an indication of how much ghosting a viewer will perceive. Effective contrast is a ratio which expresses the relative difference between the extreme whites and blacks which the projection system can 25 reproduce at the eyes of a viewer. An image with a high effective contrast ratio is sharp with a stark difference between white and black. All three of the above figures of merit are important and must be considered to produce a high quality 3-D motion picture presentation.

30 It is among the objects of the invention to overcome the disadvantages of known methods of stereoscopic separation. A practical aim of the invention is to provide a method of stereoscopic image separation that allows acceptable levels of extinction ratio, maximum 35, transmission and effective contrast without undue cost.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

According to the invention there is provided a

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method of presenting stereoscopic images comprising the steps of:

alternately displaying corresponding left-eye and right-eye images in succession;

5 substantially extinguishing transmission of light from the left-eye images to the right-eye of a viewer and from the right-eye images to the left eye of the viewer; and,

10 alternately and in synchronism with said alternate display of images, scattering unextinguished light from said left eye images that leaks through to the viewer's right eye and from the right eye images that leak through to the viewer's left eye;

15 whereby stereoscopic images of a high extinction ratio are perceived by the viewer.

The invention seeks to improve the quality of presentation of stereoscopic images and reduce or eliminate "ghosting". By alternately displaying left and right eye images while substantially extinguishing 20 transmission of light from the left eye images to the right eye of a viewer and from the right eye images to the left eye of the viewer, so-called "cross talk" interference between the images (and resulting ghosting) is minimized. Practical limitations of currently 25 available methods of image extinction, for example, by the use of polarizers or other filters or electro-optic shutters to mutually extinguish unwanted images inevitably results in some "leakage" of unwanted image information. The present invention seeks to eliminate that unwanted 30 image by scattering the unextinguished light that leaks through to the eyes of the viewer. This can be accomplished by the use of electro-optic "scattering" shutters that in effect disperse the unwanted light as a slightly increased level of background illumination. By 35 this expedient, it has been found possible to dramatically improve the extinction ratio of the system while retaining high levels of maximum light transmission and acceptable

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background contrast.

It should be noted that the corresponding 1 ft and right-eye images may overlap in time. This improves the level of maximum light transmission but at the expense 5 of some ghosting. Thus, references herein to "alternate" display of images does not indicate that the images must be presented separately (as is the case with prior art time-multiplexing systems).

In a practical example as applied to a motion 10 picture projection system, the left and right eye images are alternately projected using projectors provided with polarizing filters arranged with their axes at 90 degrees to each other. Corresponding polarizing filters are provided on eyeglasses worn by the viewer and 15 substantially extinguish transmission of unwanted image information to the viewer's eyes. The eyeglass lenses also incorporate electro-optic scattering shutters that are activated alternately to disperse any unextinguished and unwanted light that leaks through the polarizing 20 filters so that the unwanted light appears as increased background illumination. No perceptible image information is transmitted. Accordingly, the extinction ratio of the system is high in that the "wanted" or correct image appears at full brightness (subject to other optical 25 limitations of the system) while there is virtually no incorrect or unwanted image information.

The left-eye and right-eye images may be displayed as respective series of such images in a repeating on/off cycle which is the same for both series 30 of images and in which the "on" portion of the cycle is longer than the "off" portion of the cycle so that the images partially overlap. Stereoscopic images of high maximum transmission are then achieved.

In this embodiment, the scattering means are 35 activated for each series of images during the "off" portion of the cycle for those images only. For example, where scattering shutters are used in a pair of

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eyeglasses, the scattering shutter for the left eye lens will be activated during the "off" portions of the cycle for the display of left-eye images. Conversely, the scattering shutter in the right eye lens will be activated 5 during "off" portions of the right-eye image display cycle. Neither shutter will be activated during the portions of the cycle for which the images overlap. Accordingly, the improvement in maximum transmission will be at some expense in terms of reduction in scattering of 10 ghost images.

In this embodiment, the images will be optically coded and the viewers provided with eyeglasses that include optical decoding means for eliminating or reducing the ghosting that would otherwise occur during portions of 15 the cycle in which the images overlap. Optical coding/decoding may be effected by using polarizing filters as described previously or by other optically distinguishing filters such as colour or wavelength band pass filters.

20 The invention also provides corresponding apparatus for presenting stereoscopic images, and eyeglasses for use in the invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

25 The invention will be better understood with reference to the drawings which illustrate particular preferred embodiments of the invention, as compared with the prior art. By way of example, these embodiments relate to motion picture projection systems.

In the drawings:

30 FIG. 1 is a series of schematic drawings illustrating the disadvantages of the linear polarizer method of image separation;

35 FIG. 2 comprises four graphs illustrating two possible methods for temporal multiplexing of left and right eye images in accordance with the invention;

FIG. 3 illustrated the effects of scattering a ghost image; and,

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FIG. 4 is a cross-sectional view through an eyeglass shutter lens in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the invention.

DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

5 Figure 1 a) depicts the orientation of linear polarizing filters used in prior art systems which substantially separate left and right eye images. Linear polarizing axis 1 is vertical and corresponds to left eye images and linear polarizing axis 2 is horizontal and
10 corresponds to right eye images. Eyeglasses 3, have left and right eye lenses made of polarizing filters with identical orientations to those in front of the projection lenses.

An example of a system of this type is disclosed
15 in U.S. Patent No. 4,957,301 (Shaw), the disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference.

Figure 1 b) illustrates the results of linear polarized light reflecting from a non-ideal front projection screen. About 98% of the vertically polarized
20 left eye light 1 remains vertically polarized and (correctly) passes through a vertically polarizing filter, while about 2% of the light (1h) becomes horizontally polarized and will "leak" through a horizontally polarizing filter (in Fig. 1a, the right eye lens).
25 Similarly about 2% of horizontally polarized light 2 (2v) will leak through a vertically polarizing filter (the left eye lens). The contaminating light comes from both rotation of the direction of polarization and depolarization at the screen surface. In prior 3-D
30 systems using polarizers the contaminating light is transmitted through the opposite eye's filters in the eyeglasses, forming a sharp, perceptible ghost image.

Figure 1 c) illustrates another problem of prior art linear polarizer 3-D systems caused by audience
35 members tilting their heads. The eyeglasses, 3 are shown rotated "x" degrees from the vertical. Left eye light, 1 is vertically polarized and right eye light is

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horizontally polarized.

The vertically polarized light, 1 can be represented by two orthogonal vectors 1l and 1r which are parallel to the left and right eye axes of polarization of 5 the lenses of the eyeglasses when they are tilted at "x" degrees from the vertical. Vector 1r represents left eye light that will be transmitted through the right eye lens of the eyeglasses and perceived as ghosting. Similarly vector 2l represents right eye light which will be 10 transmitted through the left eye lens. Head tilting is problematic because even a slight tilt will cause significant ghosting and thereby noticeable degrade the quality of a 3-D motion picture presentation. Circular polarizers, which can address this problem, suffer from 15 ghosting which is roughly double that of linear polarizers, due to poorer extinction by the filters, and more polarization degradation on reflection from screens.

In contrast with prior art methods, the invention provides for scattering shutters to be 20 incorporated into the lenses of the viewer's eyeglasses, in combination with image extinguishing means such as polarizing filters. The scattering shutters are activated alternately and generally in synchronism with the substantially alternate display of images so that 25 unextinguished light from the left eye image that leaks through the viewer's right eye filter (and vice-versa) is scattered and no longer transmits image information to the viewer.

Furthermore, the second source of ghosting, 30 namely left eye image light which is incorrectly polarized and hence freely transmitted by the right eye filter, is also scattered by the shutter in the right eye lens.

Referring more specifically to the drawings, Fig. 2 illustrates the alternate projection of left and 35 right eye images of the inventive method. By alternately displaying left and right eye images, and shuttering the glasses with the same temporal frequency, both sources of

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leakage or ghosting are removed from the system. In Fig. 2 a) the left and right eye images are alternately displayed in a repeating on/off cycle in which the "on" and "off" portions of the cycle are of equal length (a 5 "50/50" duty cycle), so that there are never left and right eye images on the screen at the same time. When a left image is projected, the left lens of a pair of 3-D eyeglasses is transparent (time period T), whereas the right eye lens is activated (time period S) to scatter the 10 left eye image that leaks through the right eye polarizer. Likewise, when a right eye image is projected the left lens is activated scattering the right image leakage. This timing arrangement will maximize the amount of ghost scattering.

15 A modification of the left and right image sequencing illustrated in Fig. 2 a) is possible which will improve the overall brightness of the projected images at the expense of some performance in ghost scattering. In Fig. 2 b), left and right eye images are projected with a 20 duty cycle of 66/33 so that they both appear on the screen for 1/3 of the time. This improves the overall brightness of the system by 33%. Image overlap occurs during the period $t1-i$ to $t1+i$, $t2-i$ to $t2+i$ etc. The image overlap decreases the amount of time that the scattering shutters 25 can be used to reduce ghosting since each scattering shutter is only activated while there is no corresponding image on the screen. As a result the amount of ghost scattering is reduced by 33%. The duty cycle illustrated in Fig. 2 b) is illustrative only and any number of 30 possible duty cycles in which the "on" portions of the cycle are longer than the "off" portions can be chosen to optimize the overall quality of the 3-D images.

35 It is to be noted that polarizing filters or other optical coding means must be used to separate the two images during overlapping portions of the cycle.

As a consequence of the presence of scattering shutters, the scattered ghost image light is distributed

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more or less evenly over the entire shutter area and contributes to a slight increase in the overall background illumination. This slightly degrades the effective contrast of the image but is perceptually much less 5 objectionable than a ghost image. The combination of alternate image projection and the use of alternately activated scattering shutters would similarly eliminate ghosting due to head tilting.

Commercially available scattering shutters have 10 a high transmission when they are in their transparent state, typically about 80-90%. However, the transmission in the scattering or diffuse state is also relatively high, at about 10-25%. Such poor extinction makes scattering shutters unsuitable on their own as a practical 15 method for 3-D stereoscopic viewing. The high transmission of the scattering shutters in the transparent state does make them particularly suitable in a series combination with polarizers since adding them does not significantly degrade the overall transmission of light in 20 the system.

Electro-optic scattering devices have been known since the late 1960's when Dynamic Scattering liquid crystals were used in the first LCD watches and calculators. These devices are now obsolete, and have 25 been replaced by field-effect "twisted" nematic liquid crystal displays which have superior optical and electrical performance. A new class of light scattering materials, polymer dispersed liquid crystals, have characteristics which make them well suited for the 30 inventive stereoscopic display method. Typically they consist of micron sized droplets of nematic liquid crystal material dispersed in a polymer binder. The droplets strongly scatter light in a passive state and as a result the material has a white translucent appearance. When an 35 electric field is applied the liquid crystal droplets realign and the material becomes transparent. Polymer dispersed liquid crystal cells are relatively inexpensive

when compared with extinguishing type liquid crystal shutters in large area displays because they do not require as stringent manufacturing requirements. Another advantage of PDLC's is that they can be manufactured on 5 flexible substrates. It is thus possible to develop 3-D eyeglasses with curved shutters extending to the periphery of vision which give viewers a very wide field of view. This is particularly advantageous when the shutters are used in conjunction with a wide-field-of-view motion 10 picture theatre such as those built by Imax Corporation.

Examples of electro-optic scattering shutters are disclosed in United States Patents No. 4,698,668 (Milgram) and 4,907,860 (Noble). The disclosure of these references are incorporated herein by reference.

15 Fig. 3 schematically illustrates how the inventive method reduces perceptible ghosting and improves the quality of a 3-D presentation. Fig. 3 a) illustrates the prior art. A left eye image 1 of a tree is projected onto a screen 3. The left eye image is linearly polarized 20 vertically and is substantially transmitted through a vertical linear polarizing filter 6 in a pair of 3-D eyeglasses and is seen by the left eye of the viewer as the correct left eye image of a tree 5. Some of the left eye light leaks through a horizontal linear polarizer 2 that acts as the right eye lens in a pair of 3-D eyeglasses and is perceived by the right eye as a ghost 25 image 4 of the tree. Fig. 3 a) ii illustrates the reciprocal case when a right eye image 7 of the tree 1 is projected onto screen 3 and is substantially seen by a viewer's right eye as a correct image 8 and as a ghost 30 image 9 by the left eye.

Fig. 3 b) illustrates the inventive method of scattering unwanted ghost images. Electro-optic light scattering shutters 10, 12 are incorporated into the 3-D 35 eyeglasses worn by a viewer. The left eye of the viewer sees the left eye image 14 of the tree after it passes through a scattering shutter 12 that is in a transparent

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stat. Image 14 is slightly less bright than image 5 in Fig. 3 a) as a result of passing through transparent shutter 12. The right eye of the viewer sees only the scattered ghost image 16 since the right eye scattering 5 shutter 10 is activated and is in a scattering state. Fig. 3 b) ii illustrates the reciprocal case where a right eye image 7 of a tree is projected onto screen 3 and is seen as an image 18 by the right eye of a viewer after passing through a scattering shutter 10 in a transparent 10 state. The right eye image light which leaks through left eye polarizer 6 is scattered by shutter 12 which is activated and is in a scattering state. The perception of ghost images is effectively eliminated as a result of including scattering shutters 10 and 12 and the scatter d 15 images 16 and 20 are perceived only as a slight increase in background illumination. As a result the perceived quality of the 3-D presentation is greatly improved.

Fig. 4 illustrates a further form of lens assembly that may be useful in the method of the 20 invention. The lens assembly is essentially a liquid crystal cell that incorporates an electro-optic shutter, 19. The cell contains two substrates; substrate 11 is a linear polarizer film and substrate 18 is a thin flexible sheet of optically transparent polymer such as polyester. 25 Both substrates 11 and 18 are coated with a transparent protective layer 12 to provide resistance against chemical damage during the fabrication process and from the liquid crystal material in the cell. Transparent electrically conductive layers of indium tin oxide 13 are placed over 30 the protective layers 12. A thin polymer alignment layer 10 is applied over the conductive layers to promote alignment of liquid crystals in a transparent matrix 14 (to be described). An edge seal 17 extends around the periphery of the cell and acts to contain the contents of 35 the cell as well as maintain the required spacing of about 10 microns between the upper and lower substrates (11 and 18). Spacers 16 are deposited over the inner surfaces of

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the cell to ensure spacing uniformity between the upper and lower substrates over the entire area of the cell. A multitude of spherical droplets of liquid crystal material 15 are held rigidly in place by a polymer matrix 14. In 5 the relaxed state, the liquid crystal material strongly scatters light which passes through the cell. When an electric field is generated between the two conductive layers 13 the liquid crystal material in the droplets 15 is re-oriented in a manner which allows light to pass 10 through with no scattering. Since both substrates are flexible, the scattering shutter 19 can be formed into a curved profile in a pair of 3-D eyeglasses to give an extended and comfortable field of view.

In a motion picture projection system, alternate 15 projection of left and right eye images can be achieved, for example, by projecting the images from two separate filmstrips using two projectors that are synchronized with one another. Alternatively, United States Patent No. 4,966,454 (Toporkiewicz) discloses an example of a single 20 rolling loop projector capable of so-called "alternate image" projection from two separate filmstrips.

The electro-optic scattering shutters incorporated in the eyeglasses worn by the viewer must be activated in synchronism with projection of the images. 25 This can be accomplished in a variety of ways, for example by suitable electrical circuitry for triggering the shutters in synchronization with the projector or projectors. United States Patent No. 5,002,387 (Baljet et al.) discloses a projection synchronization system in 30 which infrared signals are used to synchronize prior art blocking shutters in a time multiplexing stereoscopic system. The disclosure of this patent is incorporated herein by reference.

The following discussion will further illustrate 35 the advantages of the use of scattering shutters in accordance with the invention, as compared with the prior art:

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In a typical 3-D motion picture system using polarizers there is a degradation or loss of correctly polarized light at three different stages in the path of light from the projector lenses to the eyes of a viewer.

5 The first loss of available light occurs when light leaving the projection lenses passes through linear polarizing filters. Typically only about 42% of the available light generated by the lamphouse of a projector will be correctly polarized after passing through a linear 10 polarizing filter. Additionally about 0.01% of the light leaving the filter will be incorrectly polarized - that is polarized in an orthogonal direction to the correctly polarized light.

15 The second reduction in the amount of correctly polarized light occurs when the light is reflected from a projection screen. There is a tendency for linear polarized light to depolarize upon reflection from a surface, although a metallic screen helps considerably with this. There is also a tendency for the direction of 20 polarization to rotate slightly on reflection from different surfaces. Typically around 97% of the light will maintain the correct polarization, 1% of the light will rotate to the wrong polarization, and 2% will be depolarized (hence being equally split between correct and 25 wrong polarization).

The third reduction in the amount of correctly polarized light occurs when the light is transmitted through the linear polarizing filters found in the eyeglasses worn by members of the audience. Typically 30 only about 76% of correctly polarized light is transmitted and about 0.01% of incorrectly or orthogonal polarized light is transmitted.

35 The quality figures of merit for a 3-D motion picture system can be calculated using the above information by considering the effects of each image reduction stage in succession upon light transmission, extinction ratio and effective contrast.

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Figures of merit for the inventive method can be calculated for comparison by including the effects of adding scattering electro-optic shutters to the 3-D eyeglasses. The scattering shutters have an on state 5 transmission of about 85%, an off state transmission of 1% and an off state diffuse transmission of about 10% (into a typical solid angle subtended by a viewer's eye). The table below illustrates the advantages of the invention. The first column contains the three image quality figures 10 of merit for the prior art method of 3-D motion picture projection using linear polarizers in front of the projection lenses and in eyeglasses worn by members of the audience. The second column contains the three figures of merit for the inventive 3-D method. The extinction ratio 15 of the inventive shutters is increased dramatically (over 8500%) as a result of incorporating electro-optic scattering shutters into the 3-D glasses. The maximum transmission and the effective contrast ratio when using the inventive method are only marginally decreased. The 20 third and fourth column contain the quality figures of merit for the prior art and the inventive method for the case when the head of a viewer is tilted 15 degrees from the vertical. Again there is a great increase in the extinction ratio when the inventive method is used 25 accompanied by a modest decrease in the other two figures of merit. Overall the quality of a 3-D presentation is greatly improved when using the inventive method.

As a guideline, the figures of merit should be judged as follows: transmission should be maximized; 30 extinction ratio should be a minimum of 100:1, though improvements up to 1000:1 may be worthwhile; effective contrast should be a minimum of 25:1, though improvements up to 100:1 may be worthwhile.

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	<u>Prior Art</u>	<u>Inv.</u>	<u>Prior Art</u> @ 15 deg.	<u>Inv.</u> @ 15 deg.
Maximum Transmission	31.0	26.3	28.9	24.6
5 Extinction Ratio	93.6	7,970	12.1	1,030
Effective Contrast	60:1	59:1	60:1	52:1

An additional benefit of the invention is that
 10 some materials can now be used in the system which
 otherwise could not because of their contribution to
 excessive ghosting. An example is the use of circular
 polarizers which separate light into clockwise and
 15 counterclockwise polarized light. They can be used in the
 place of linear polarizing filters in a 3-D presentation
 system and they have the advantage that they are largely
 immune to ghosting caused by head tilt. However they
 exhibit less polarization preservation upon reflection
 20 from front projection screens. Typically they exhibit a
 extinction ratio of roughly half that of a linear
 polarizer, although this does remain fairly constant at
 different head tilt angles. By using the inventive method
 with circular polarizers, the extinction ratio can be
 increased to acceptable values for any angle of head tilt.

25 The invention addresses several limitations and
 disadvantages of prior art systems. It provides a 3-D
 image separation method that has a high extinction ratio
 and is not susceptible to ghosting caused by head tilting.
 Electro-optic scattering liquid crystal shutters are less
 30 expensive to manufacture than typical liquid crystal
 optical shutters and can be incorporated in wide-field-of-
 view 3-D eyeglasses with curved lenses extending into the
 periphery of vision, for use in a wide-field-of-view
 motion picture theatre.

35 The above description should not be construed as
 limiting the scope of the invention but as merely

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providing illustrations of some of the preferred embodiments of this invention. For example although polarizing filters are described, other optically extinguishing filters such as colour or wavelength band 5 pass filters could be used.

Electro-optic blocking shutters could also be used. Shutters of this type are well-known in the prior art and are disclosed for example in United States Patent No. 4,424,529 (Roese et al.). Practical examples of 10 shutters of this type are reasonably efficient at blocking light. However, some leakage of light can occur and can result in unacceptable ghosting. As a practical matter, presently available examples of this type of shutter are relatively expensive and have the disadvantage such, while 15 this type of shutter could certainly be used in principle, this may be impractical at the current stage of technology.

Scattering of unwanted image information is preferably achieved using electro-optic scattering 20 shutters as described previously. However in principle, other scattering means could be used, for example, scattering filters in combination with mechanical means for displacing the filters into and out of the viewer's line of sight for each eye.

Finally, while reference has been made primarily 25 to use of the present invention in motion picture systems in which the images are normally projected onto a screen, other methods of display such as display on a television or a computer monitor are possible in the context of the 30 present invention.

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WE CLAIM:

1. A method of presenting stereoscopic images which comprises the steps of:
 - 5 alternately displaying corresponding left eye and right eye images in succession;
 - substantially extinguishing transmission of light from the left eye images to the right eye of a viewer and from the right eye images to the left eye of the viewer; and,
 - 10 alternately and in synchronism with said alternate display of images, scattering unextinguished light from said left eye images that leaks through to the viewer's right eye and from the right eye images that leak through to the viewer's left eye;
 - 15 whereby stereoscopic images of high extinction ratio are perceived by the viewer.
2. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said images are displayed by projecting the images onto a screen and wherein the step of substantially extinguishing 20 transmission of light is performed by optically filtering the light that is projected onto the screen and correspondingly filtering the light that reaches the eyes of the viewer by providing the viewer with eyeglasses that include optical filters, the filters being selected to 25 substantially extinguish transmission of light from the left eye images to the right eye of the viewer and from the right eye images to the left eye of the viewer.
3. A method as claimed in claim 2, wherein said filtering step is performed using mutually extinguishing 30 polarizing filters.
4. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein said step of alternately scattering unextinguished light is performed by providing the viewer with eyeglasses having

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lenses that include electro-optic liquid crystal cells that are capable of adopting a scattering state and a transmissive state, and alternately activating said cells in synchronism with said alternate display of images so 5 that, when a left eye image is displayed, the cell in the right eye eyeglass lens is activated and when a right eye image is displayed, the cell in the left eye eyeglass lens is activated.

5. An apparatus for presenting stereoscopic images, 10 which comprises:

means for alternately displaying corresponding left eye and right eye images in succession;

15 means for substantially extinguishing transmission of light from the left eye images to the right eye of a viewer and from the right eye images to the left eye of the viewer; and,

20 means for alternately and in synchronism with said alternate display of images, scattering unextinguished light from said left eye images that leaks through to the viewer's right eye and from the right eye images that leaks through to the viewer's left eye.

6. An apparatus as claimed in claim 5, wherein said images are displayed by projecting the images onto a screen and wherein said means for substantially 25 extinguishing transmission of light comprises means for optically filtering the light that is projected onto the screen and correspondingly means for filtering the light that reaches the eyes of the viewer, the filtering means being selected to substantially extinguish transmission of 30 light from the left eye images to the right eye of the viewer and from the right eye images to the left eye of the viewer.

7. An apparatus as claimed in claim 6, wherein said filtering means comprises mutually extinguishing

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polarizing filters.

8. An apparatus as claimed in claim 5, wherein said means for scattering unextinguished light comprises eyeglasses having lenses that include electro-optic liquid crystal cells that are capable of adopting a scattering state and a transmissive state, and means for alternately activating said cells in synchronism with said alternate display of images so that, when a left eye image is displayed, the cell in the right eye eyeglass lens is activated and when a right eye image is displayed, the cell in the left eye eyeglass lens is activated.

9. For use in the method as claimed in claim 1, eyeglasses for wearing by the viewer of said images, the eyeglasses have respective left and right eye lenses, each of which includes one of blocking shutter means and filter means for performing at least part of said step of substantially extinguishing transmission of light, and an electro-optic scattering shutter which is actuatable in synchronism with said alternate display of images between a transmissive state and a scattering state.

10. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said corresponding left-eye and right-eye images are displayed as respective series of such images;

25 wherein said step of substantially extinguishing transmission of light from the left-eye images to the right eye of a viewer and from the right-eye images to the left eye of the viewer is performed by optically coding the images and providing the viewer with eyeglasses that

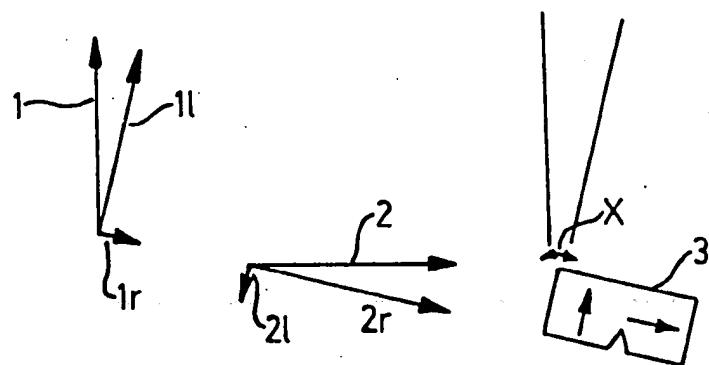
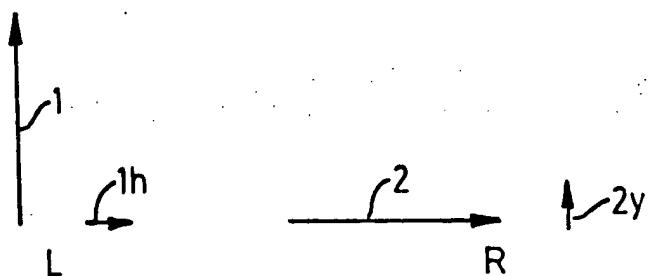
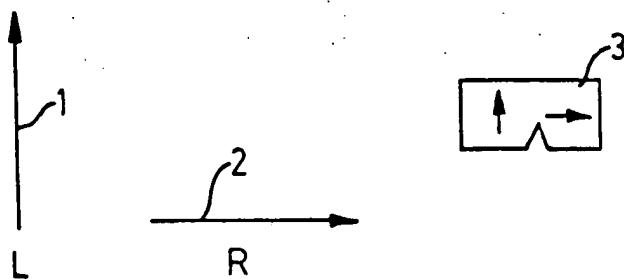
30 include optical decoding means;

and wherein the images in each said series are displayed in a repeating on/off cycle which is the same for both series of images and in which the "on" portion of the cycle is longer than the "off" portion of the cycle so

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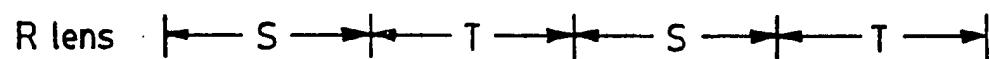
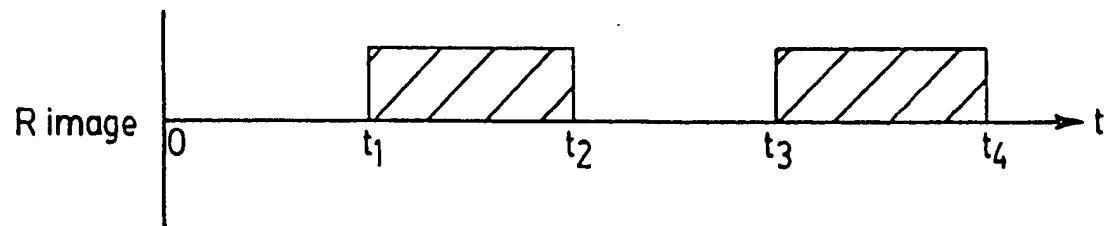
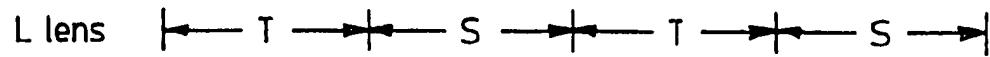
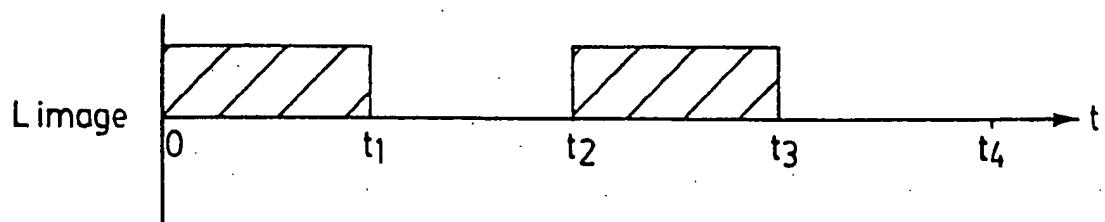
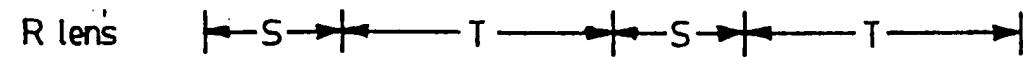
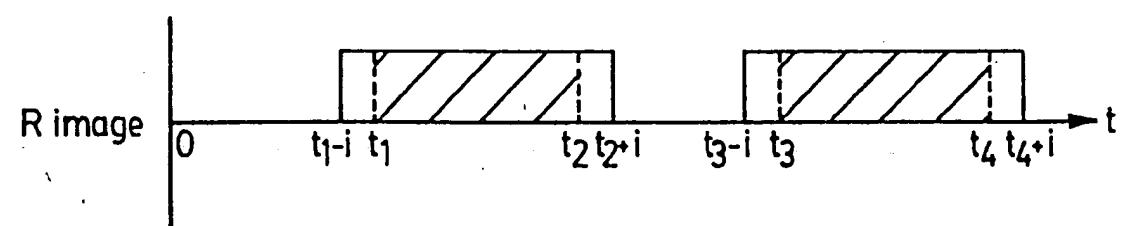
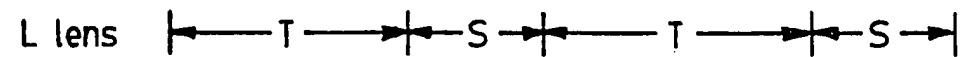
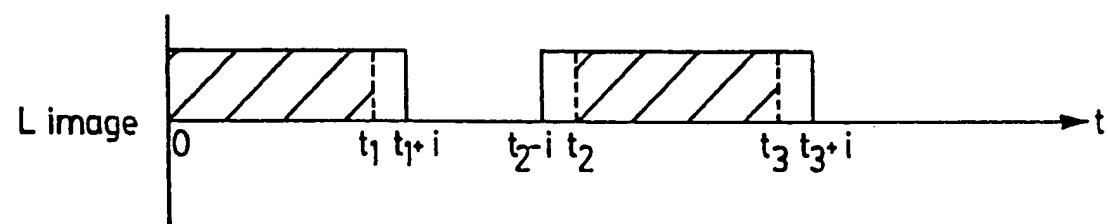
that the images partially overlap;
whereby said stereoscopic images are also of
high maximum transmission.

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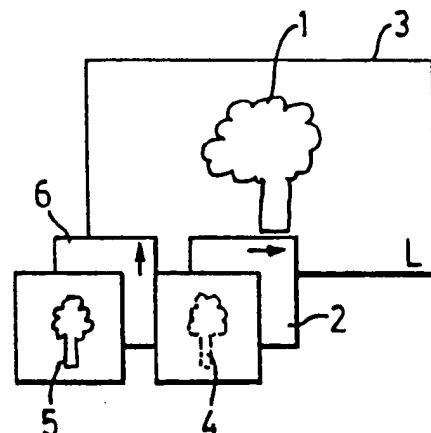
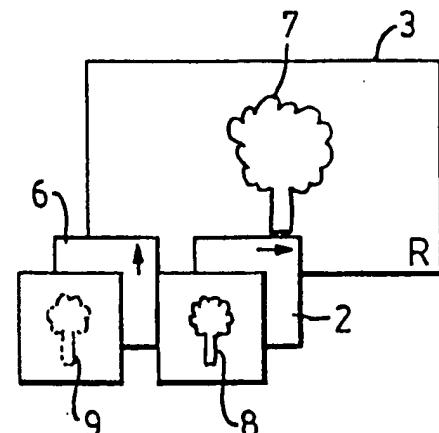
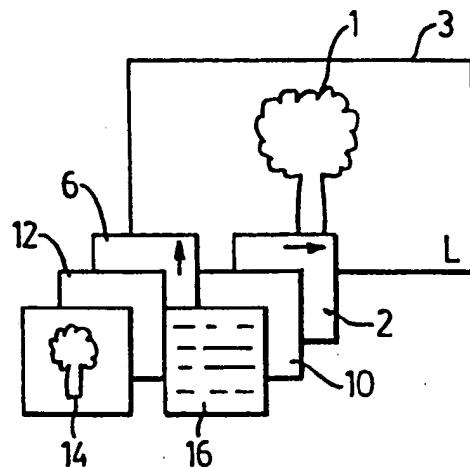
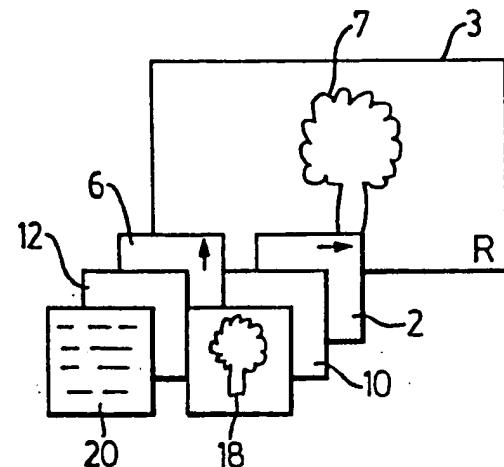


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FIG. 2aFIG. 2b**SUBSTITUTE SHEET**

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FIG. 3a(i)FIG. 3a(ii)FIG. 3b(i)FIG. 3b(ii)**SUBSTITUTE SHEET**

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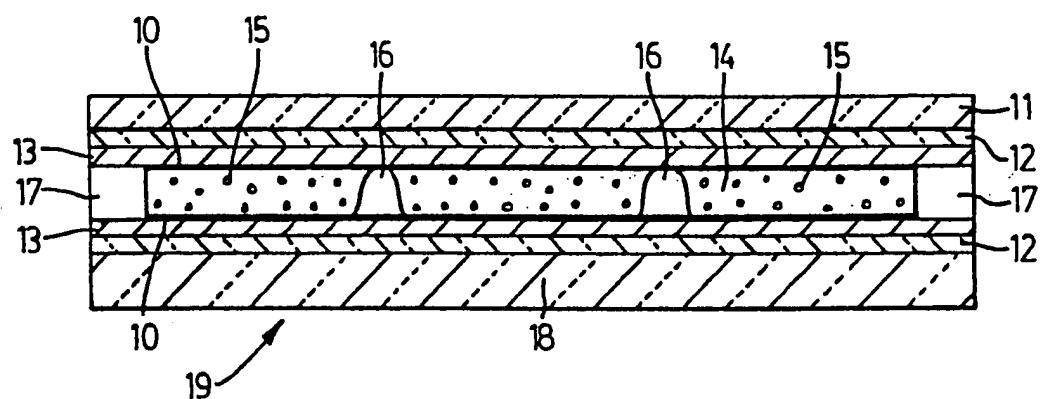


FIG. 4

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Intern. Appl. No.
PCT/CA 93/00531A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
IPC 5 G03B35/16

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
IPC 5 G03B G02B H04N

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
Y	FR,A,2 354 013 (G. LETERME) 30 December 1977	1,5
A	see page 1 - page 4; figures 1-5 see page 1 - page 4; figures 1-5 ---	2,3,6,7
Y	US,A,4 907 860 (L.A.NOBLE) 13 March 1990 cited in the application	1,5
A	see column 1 - column 5; figures 1-3 see column 1 - column 5; figures 1-3 ---	4,8,9
A	US,A,4 884 876 (L.LIPTON) 5 December 1989 see column 5 - column 12; figures 1-13 -----	1,5

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Date of the actual completion of the international search

14 April 1994

Date of mailing of the international search report

22.04.94

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Authorized officer

Boeykens, J

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International Application No

PCT/CA 93/00531

Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
FR-A-2354013	30-12-77	NONE	
US-A-4907860	13-03-90	NONE	
US-A-4884876	05-12-89	NONE	